

# “Debris”

By Seraphim Yoho, USA



The first time I bloomed I blamed myself. I pointed the finger at my own habits, deciding the painful weeds in my garden had to have stemmed from lack of watering, or from my fertilizer not holding enough nutrients. I stayed silent as the harvest died and returned.

The fifth time I bloomed, my garden began to wilt. The soil turned dry and lost its color. I finally showed someone my acid flowers when they became too unbearable to tend to alone. It was a long road of pain; my garden was uprooted and my weeds were mangled and trimmed. The landscaping left me limping, slinking like a wounded animal. I was humiliated, exposing myself to others, cloaked in a heavy sheet of blame, insisting that this still had to be all my fault.

The sixth time I bloomed, I was too weak to keep waiting. I spent hours by myself, combing through the words of every doctor I saw, every diagnosis they had given and every medicine prescribed. In the end, I alone would find the source of the weeds in my garden.

The tenth time I bloomed, I painted a picture. In the place of blotchy patches of skin, tunneling wounds and tacky rings from bandage adhesive, I painted what they really ought to be.

Flowers.

My garden is my own, and I share the damage in the wake of its episodic harvest with many others. I refuse to let this landscape taint me as a barren wasteland. Its acres are both my grace and my pain. I have learned to find the beauty in their seasons.

I am fifteen and was diagnosed with HS approximately a year and a half ago.!